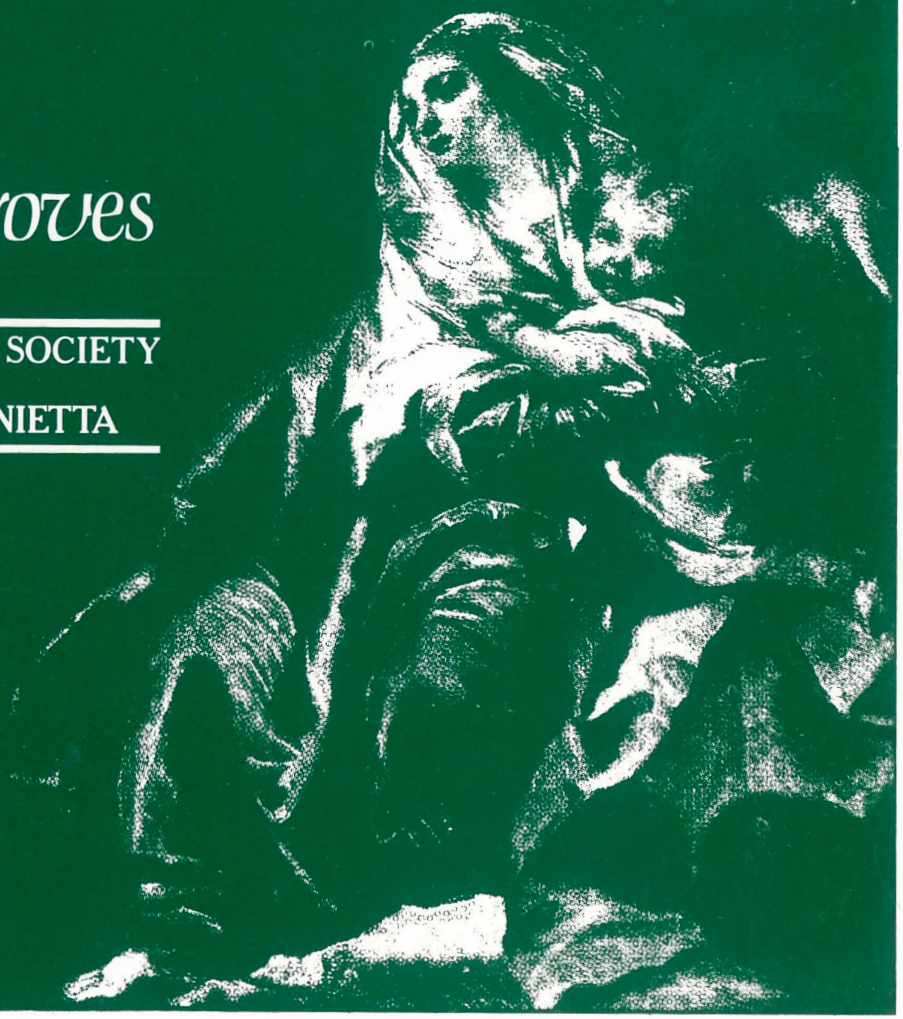
L´Enfance Du Christ
BERLIOZ

Sir Charles Groves
conducts

SOUTHAMPTON CHORAL SOCIETY
Chorus Master **Ian Watson**

BOURNEMOUTH SINFONIETTA



SOUTHAMPTON CHORAL SOCIETY

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR – OWAIN ARWEL HUGHES.

presents

L'Enfance Du Christ

(The Childhood of Christ)

BERLIOZ

Conductor

Sir Charles Groves

BOURNEMOUTH SINFONIETTA

Leader/Director Ronald Thomas

Soloists:

Bernadette Greevy	Mezzo-Soprano
Richard Morton	Tenor
Malcolm Donnelly	Baritone
Colin Iveson	Bass

Friday 19th December 1980 at 7.30pm
The Guildhall, Southampton.

Patrons are reminded that smoking is not permitted in the hall.

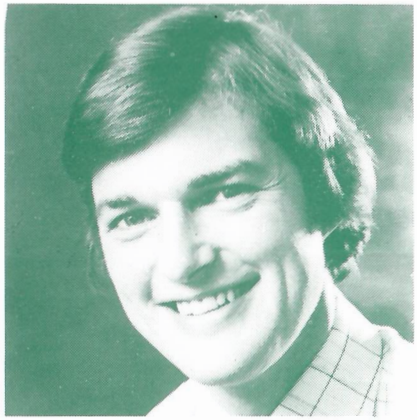
SIR CHARLES GROVES

Charles Groves was born in London and spent his boyhood as a chorister at St. Paul's Cathedral. His exceptional musicianship – as a pianist, organist and conductor was soon recognised; while still a student at the Royal College of Music he accompanied Toscanini's choral rehearsals for the BBC.

On leaving the Royal College he joined the BBC Opera Unit. When 29 he was appointed conductor of the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra. In 1951 he left Manchester to become music director of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; after ten years he became music director of the Welsh National Opera, with whom he had been associated for many years.

In 1963 he moved to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra where he spent fourteen productive years, conducting much contemporary music and encouraging many young conductors and artists; he also became the first British conductor to direct the complete cycle of Mahler's symphonies. He made numerous records for EMI with the orchestra and also took them on regular tours abroad.

Since 1967 he has had an affectionate relationship with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra as their associate conductor. In 1977 he became music director of the English National Opera, a post he relinquished in 1980 to devote more time to freelance opera and orchestral concerts both here and abroad.



IAN WATSON

Born in Buckinghamshire, Ian Watson became a Junior Exhibitioner and subsequently studied at the Royal Academy of Music, where he won all the organ prizes. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

In 1974 he was elected to attend the International Organ Master Classes held by Flor Peeters in Belgium. Since then he has given recitals and broadcasts in many London churches, in cathedrals over a wide area of England, and in Oxford and Cambridge colleges. He has been the assistant organist to Richard Hickox at St. Margaret's Church, Westminster since 1972.

He is an accomplished pianist and has performed concerti at the St. Endellion Festival in Cornwall and with the Princes Risborough Choral Society, of which he is the regular conductor.

Since 1979 he has been chorus master of the Southampton Choral Society, working closely with Owain Arwel Hughes. This year he has worked extensively with The Singers Company as chief repetiteur and has conducted performances both on tour and for Southern Television.

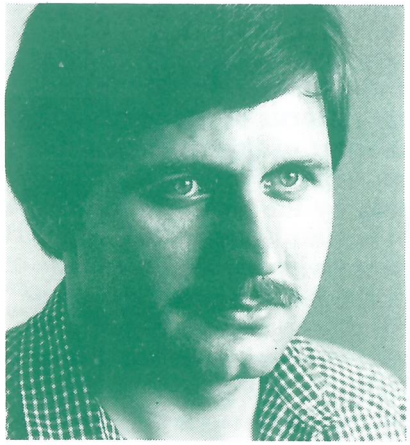
BERNADETTE GREEVY

According to many international music critics, Bernadette Greevy is one of the finest dramatic mezzos singing today. Born in Dublin, she has travelled to Europe, Canada, the USA, the Middle East and Far East, singing in recital and with orchestras under such distinguished conductors as Sir John Barbirolli, Sir Charles Groves, Pierre Boulez and Sir David Willcocks.

Recently she made a very successful tour of New Zealand. She has appeared in many important music festivals including Bath, Edinburgh and Paris, and is a regular guest at the Proms.

Her recent performances have included Mahler's 3rd and 8th Symphonies, Tippett's *A Child of Our Time* conducted by the composer in the US and Stockholm, Verdi's *Requiem* in the Brighton Festival with Alberto Erede and for Pope John Paul II at the open air mass in Dublin.

She has also made a number of highly successful recordings.

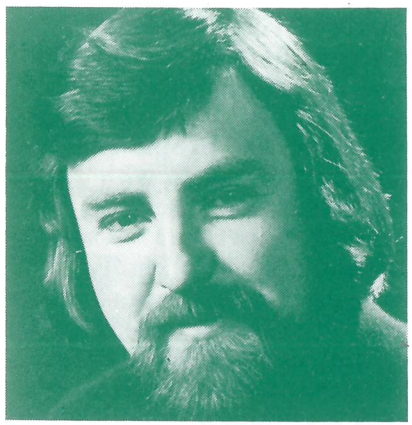


RICHARD MORTON

Born in Yorkshire, Richard Morton won a choral scholarship to King's College, Cambridge in 1970. He now gives song recitals and performs in oratorio throughout this country and abroad.

His repertoire spans five centuries of music. Over the past few years he has established himself as one of the country's most promising young tenors, singing regularly on the South Bank, in Prom concerts and festivals. He has made several recordings and he regularly records for the BBC. In 1978 he was awarded a scholarship from the Royal Society of Arts to study with Tito Gobbi in Italy.

Recent engagements have included performances of *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabeus* in Warsaw, and concerts in Holland, Germany and Italy. He joined the Welsh National Opera this year as a principal tenor, while continuing his busy concert schedule here and abroad.

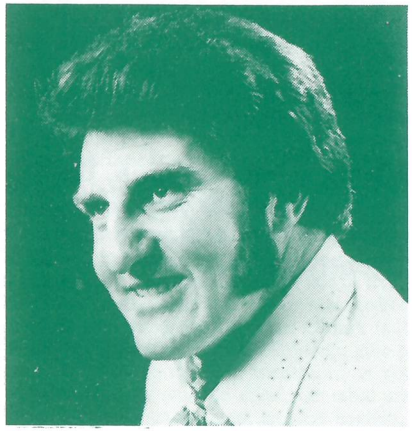


COLIN IVESON

Born in Wirrall, Cheshire, Colin Iveson studied at the Royal Northern College of Music with Patrick McGuigan, and won a Peter Moores Foundation Scholarship to study with Otakar Kraus and at the London Opera Centre.

He began his operatic career in 1976 singing Neptune in *Idomeneo* with Glyndebourne Opera in Paris. Since then he has performed with English National Opera, Kent Opera and Chelsea Opera Group.

Amongst his appearances on the concert platform are Janacek's *Jenufa* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under Simon Rattle, and *Judas Maccabeus* in Warsaw last year.



MALCOLM DONNELLY

Born in Sydney, he studied at the Sydney Conservatorium and Opera School, and sang with the Australian Opera for two seasons. He was also a regular recitalist for the Australian Broadcasting Commission. After winning his country's premier operatic competition and a scholarship from the Australian Opera auditions, he came to Britain in 1970.

He studied at the London Opera Centre, then joined the Scottish Opera for All group, becoming a principal with Scottish Opera and then an associate artist. He has toured abroad with the company to Germany, Switzerland and Poland.

He has sung in concert with the Scottish National, BBC Scottish and Ulster Orchestras, has recorded recitals for BBC Scotland and sang the title role in the opera *Joe Hill* by Alan Bush for the BBC.

Malcolm Donnelly is currently singing with the English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Scottish Opera for the 1980/81 season.

HECTOR BERLIOZ

11th December 1803 – 8th March 1869

Berlioz was born in a small town near Grenoble in the South of France, son of a cultured, broadminded physician of the type that toils almost incessantly for the good of his patients. He did not want his son to be a musician, though the young Berlioz was a proficient recorder player and flautist. He was allowed guitar lessons, but not the piano.

His father persuaded him to become a doctor much against Hector's inclination, and to that end bribed him with an expensive flute. Medicine revolted Berlioz, who at his first encounter with anatomy was so overcome with horror that "he took a flying leap out of the window and ran back to his lodgings."

However, he completed his training, in spite of his increasing association with the Conservatoire in Paris – where he also studied composition with Lesueur who accepted him as a student with the comment that "there is a fair amount of power in your work, and dramatic feeling, but you don't know how to write music; your harmony is one mass of mistakes . . . "

Berlioz was passionate about Shakespeare and many other English writers, as witness in his works: *Waverley, Rob Roy, King Lear, Fantasie on The Tempest, Cleopatra, The Damnation of Faust,* and *Romeo and Juliet.*

He numbered many writers, such as Victor Hugo, Dumas and Balzac amongst his friends, as also were Chopin, Liszt and Wagner. He belonged to the great French Romantic movement, which believed in the emotions being displayed within the music, and developed his 'fixed idea' of a central theme which appears in all movements of a work, such as in Liszt's *Metamorphoses of Themes* and Wagner's *Leitmotifs.*

His long years as a critic gave us many examples of his literary ability and he will be remembered for his *Treatise on Orchestration.* He travelled widely, including visits to England in 1848, 1852 and 1855.

His *Childhood of Christ* was first performed in Paris in 1854, and subsequently in Manchester in 1880. Much of his music is grandiose and uses large resources, such as in his *Requiem* and *Te Deum*, but the work we shall hear tonight is much simpler and lighter in texture.

THE CHILDHOOD OF CHRIST

L'Enfance du Christ is a modern oratorio, which in present-day terms is taken to mean an extended setting of a religious text for chorus, orchestra and soloists.

This oratorio is scored on more moderate lines than most of Berlioz's works, and is in three parts:

I Herod's Dream (Le Songe d'Hérode).
II The Flight into Egypt (La Fuite en Egypte).
III The Arrival at Sais (L'Arrivée a Sais).

The second part was written first and has been used as a separate work, as has its beautiful and familiar Shepherd's Farewell. Berlioz wrote the text himself and it is an excellent example of his literary style.

The first part tells of the birth of Christ and then depicts a street in Jerusalem with the Roman soldiers on patrol. Following this is a scene in Herod's palace and the arrival of the soothsayers, with strange if not beautiful music in the dialogue. Then we come to the stable, where the superb duet sung by Mary and Joseph is enriched by a light accompaniment for strings and woodwind. There is a graceful lullaby followed by the arrival of a choir of angels who warn them of Herod's intentions.

The second part opens with an instrumental overture for strings, two flutes, oboe and cor anglais, and includes the wonderfully simple chorus of shepherds. The finest part of this section is the scene depicting the Holy Family resting by the wayside; the music here is simple, beautiful and perfect in its appropriateness.

In the third section, the scene of Mary and Joseph begging for shelter is deeply moving. Mary is so fatigued that she is on the verge of collapse, so they knock at the door of a Roman house; six basses roar at them:

"Arrière, vils Hébreux!
Les gens de Rome n'ont que faire de vagabonds et de lépreux." (Be gone, you vile Hebrews! The people of Rome have nothing to do with vagabonds and lepers.)

Eventually they are accommodated by a kindly Ishmaelite family, three of whom play an enchanting little trio for two flutes and a Theban harp. During the ensemble the Holy Family are bidden:

"Allez dormir, bon père, doux enfant, tendre mère, bien reposez."
(Go to sleep, good father, sweet infant, tender mother, rest well.)

After a short narration, the oratorio concludes with an exquisite choral epilogue that dies gently away.

THE CHILDHOOD OF CHRIST

A Sacred Trilogy

FIRST PART
HEROD'S DREAM

Narrator: At this time, in a manger, lay Jesus, who had just been born; but no sign had made known this news. While kings were afraid, the weak were given hope, and everyone waited. So listen, Christians, what atrocious crime the king of the Jews resolved to commit through fear. Hear how Jesus's parents, in their humble stable, were sent the message from God their saviour.

Scene 1: A street in Jerusalem. A bodyguard. Roman soldiers on night patrol.

NOCTURNAL MARCH

A Centurion: Who goes there?
Polydorus, the commander of the patrol: Roman.
Cent: Forward!
Polydorus: Stay there!
Cent: Polydorus! I thought you were already on the banks of the Tiber, soldier.
Polydorus: And I would be there, if your illustrious praetor, Gallus, had let me go; but for no reason he has imprisoned me in this sad city, to watch over its madness, and watch over the sleepless nights of a mad Jewish king.
Cent: What is Herod doing?
Polydorus: He is dreaming; he is shaking with fear; he can see traitors everywhere. He calls an assembly every day, and you have to watch over him from morning to night. Truth to say he is driving us crazy.
Cent: The mad tyrant! But go, do your rounds.
Polydorus: Yes, I must be off. Goodbye. May Jupiter confound him!

The patrol moves off into the distance.

Scene 2: Interior of Herod's Palace.

Herod's Aria

Herod: Always this same dream! That child is still there, who will dethrone me. And I don't know what to think from this menacing omen . . What will happen to my life, and my glory? Oh the misery of kings; to reign and not to live; to give laws to everyone and yet to want to follow the deer into the darkest woods! O dark night that holds the world plunged in sleep, give peace for an hour to my ravaged breast and let your veil slip over my worried mind. Oh what useless effort! I cannot catch sleep, and my useless complaining does not quicken the flight of this interminable night.

Scene 3:

Polydorus: Master!
Herod: Weaklings, begin to tremble! I still know how to wield a sword.
Polydorus: Halt!
Herod: Oh, it is you, Polydorus. What have you come to tell me?
Polydorus: Master, the wise men of the Jews have just followed your instructions to assemble.
Herod: At last!
Polydorus: They are here.
Herod: Let them appear!

Scene 4: Herod and the Wise Men.

Wise Men: The Wise Men of Judea recognise you as a wise and generous king, sire. They are devoted to you. Speak; what do you want them to do?
Herod: Let them advise me if there is some remedy for the all-consuming worry which has obsessed me for so long.
Wise Men: Tell us all.
Herod: Every night the same dream haunts me. There is always a slow and serious voice which repeats these words to me: "Your hours of happiness are over. A child has been born who will rob you of your throne and your power." Are you able to tell me if this fear which consumes me is well founded? Is there a way to avoid this awesome danger?
Wise Men: The Spirits must know. They will surely tell us if we ask them.

The Wise Men perform a Cabalistic procession and exorcism.

Wise Men: The voice is telling the truth, sire. A child has just been born who will usurp your power and your throne. Nobody, however, knows either his name nor where he comes from.
Herod: What should I do then?
Wise Men: You will fail, unless we do as the black spirits say, and you decide the future of all the newly-born children by sentencing them to death.
Herod: So be it then; let them all be stabbed to death! I cannot hold back. Let the blows of my sword have their fill of all the newly born in Jerusalem, in Nazareth and in Bethlehem. In spite of the cries, in spite of the tears of so many distraught mothers, rivers of blood must be made to flow. I shall turn a blind eye to these sufferings. Neither beauty, nor grace, nor age shall weaken my courage. My own fears must be calmed.
Wise Men: Yes, yes, let them all die by the sword! Let us not hesitate!
Herod: No, no!
Wise Men: Remain blind to these sufferings! Let nothing sway your courage! And you Spirits, stir up his anger by doubling his fears.

Scene 5: The stable at Bethlehem.
Mary: O my dear son, give this sweet grass to these lambs who are calling to you! They are so gentle. Let them take it! Don't make them wait, my child, my dearest child!
Mary & Joseph: Lay these flowers in their stall as well! They are grateful for your gifts; see how happy they are! Watch them play! See how lovingly their mother watches over you! O bless you, my dear sweet child!

Scene 6: Invisible Angels. Mary. Joseph.

Angels: Joseph! Mary! Listen to us!
Mary & Joseph: Holy Spirits, is it really you?
Angels: We must save your son from the great danger which threatens him, Mary!
Mary: Heavens, my son!
Angels: Yes, you must leave here and tell no-one where you are going. You must go this evening across the desert to Egypt.
Mary & Joseph: As you advise, Holy Spirits, we shall flee with Jesus into the desert. Just grant our humble prayer for prudence and strength and we shall save him.
Angels: The powers of God will keep all evils from your path.
Mary & Joseph: Let us hurry up and prepare to leave!
Angels: Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna!

INTERVAL

SECOND PART
THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

The shepherds are gathering in front of the stable in Bethlehem.

The shepherds bid farewell to the Holy Family.

Shepherds: He is going far away from the place where, in a stable, he was born. May he always be the only concern of his father and his mother. May he grow, may he prosper, may he in his turn be a good father. If ever, in heathen lands, he suffers misfortune, may he leave his homeland and return to happiness with us. May he always have a certain place in his heart for the pastures! Dear child, may God bless you; God bless you, happy couple. May you never suffer the blows of injustice. May a guardian angel always warn you of the dangers which hover over you!

The Holy Family Resting.

Narrator: The pilgrims having arrived in a beautiful place where there were leafy trees and pure water in abundance, saintly Joseph said:

"Let us stop! By this crystal fountain, after so many hardships let us rest here." The baby Jesus was sleeping. Then saintly Mary, drawing the donkey to a halt said: "See this fine carpet of grass; the Saviour has spread it in the desert for my son." Then, having settled themselves down under the shade of three green-leaved palm trees – the donkey grazing, the child sleeping – the sacred travellers slept awhile, lulled by sweet dreams, and the heavenly angels knelt around them to adore the holy child.
Angels: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

THIRD PART
THE ARRIVAL IN SAIS

Narrator: For three days, in spite of a ferocious wind, they made their way across the moving sands. The donkey, that poor servant of the holy family had already collapsed in the desert; and long before seeing the lights of a city, his master too would have succumbed to hunger and thirst without the help of God. Only Mary marched on, serene and calm, and the blond hair and blessed head of her child seemed to give her strength as it lay upon her breast. But then their steps began to falter. How many times the couple were forced to stop!

At last, however, they arrived in Sais, exhausted and almost at the point of death. This was a city which had been taken back by the Roman Empire a long time ago, full of cruel people with disdainful looks on their faces. What a long time these pilgrims suffered whilst looking for food and shelter!

Scene 1: Inside the Town of Sais.

Mary: What a commotion! This town is full of people who jostle forward in crowds. Joseph, I'm afraid . . . I cannot go on . . . I am tired . . . I am dying . . . You go and knock on that door!
Joseph: Open up, open up, give us help! Let us rest in your house! Please give the woman and her child a kindly welcome. We have come from Judea on foot.
Chorus: Get back you vile Hebrews! The people of Rome have nothing to do with vagabonds and lepers.
Mary: My feet are staining the ground with blood.
Joseph: Sire, my wife is almost dead.
Mary: Jesus is going to die . . . there is nothing to stop him: my shrivelled breasts have no milk left with which to feed him.
Joseph: Let us try and knock again at this door. Oh have pity, help us! Let us rest in your house! Please give the woman and her child a kindly welcome. We have come from Judea on foot.
Chorus: Get back you vile Hebrews! The people of Egypt have nothing to do with vagabonds and lepers.
Joseph: Sire, save the mother! Mary is finished . . . it is the end . . . her child has no milk. Your inhospitable homes are closed to us. Your hearts are hard. Under this row of sycamores there is a humble roof, set apart from the other houses. Let us knock again. Mary, maybe your sweet voice, together with mine, will move these people to pity us.
Mary: Oh alas, we shall have to suffer insult and hatred everywhere. I am weakening . . .
Joseph & Mary: Oh take pity, help us! Let us rest in your house! Please give the woman and her child a kindly welcome. We have come from Judea on foot.

Scene 2: Inside the house of the Ishmaelites.

The Father: Come in, come in, you poor Jews! Our door is never closed to the unfortunate. Dear God, what a state! Let us hurry to relieve them. Sons and daughters, and servants, show the goodness of your hearts. Let us wash the wounds from their mangled feet. Give them water; give them milk and ripe grapes. Make a bed straight away for the child!

The young Ishmaelites and their servants disappear into the house to carry out the father's many orders.

Father: Your tired looks are stamped with the

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signs of sadness. Take courage! We will do what we can to help you. Do not fear! The children of Ishmael are the brothers of those of Israel. We found freedom in Libya in Syria. What are your names?

Joseph: She is called Mary. I'm Joseph, and we have called the child Jesus.

Father: Jesus; what a charming name! Well what do you do for a living? Yes, what's your trade?

Joseph: I'm a carpenter.

Father: Well that's my trade too; you can be my partner. We'll work together and earn plenty of money. Don't worry! Jesus will grow up with us; then he will be able to help you. And he will learn wisdom. Don't worry! To finish this evening well, and to please our guests, we shall use the sacred science of sweet music. Take up your instruments my children! All suffering is eased by the flute and the theban harp playing together. You are crying young woman . . . gentle tears, that's better!

Trio for two flutes and a harp.

Father: Go to sleep good father, sweet child, tender mother. Rest yourselves well and sleep soundly. No more worries. May the charms of the hope of happiness fill your heart.

Joseph & Mary: Goodnight, thank you kind father, already my bitter pains are disappearing, vanishing. I am no longer afraid of anything.

Scene 3: Epilogue.

Narrator: So it was that the Saviour was saved by a heathen. During ten years Mary and Joseph watched him blossom with sublime gentleness and infinite tenderness, together with a great wisdom. Then finally when he came back to his birthplace, he chose to make the divine sacrifice which would give men eternal hope and bestow their path with salvation.

Narrator & Chorus: O my soul, what is there left for you to do, if not to swallow your pride before such a great mystery? O my soul, O my heart be filled with pure and faithful love, which alone can give us hope of eternal life. Amen.

Tonight's performance will be sung in French

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The Society is affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies, which supports our concerts with funds from the Arts Council of Great Britain. We are also grateful to Southampton Corporation for financial support.

We are always delighted to welcome new singers, in all vocal sections but especially tenors and basses. Auditions, involving basic sight-reading and simple vocal and aural tests, can be held after any of our rehearsals, which start at 7.15 every Monday evening. Contact the membership secretary, Mrs G Bagshaw, tel. Titchfield 45978.

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Beethoven – 9th Symphony
Conductor – Owain Arwel Hughes

Orchestra formed from members of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Sinfonietta.

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Serenade for Strings **Elgar**

Mezzo-soprano solo Anne Wilkens
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra conductor Owain Arwel Hughes

FRIDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER 1981 AT THE GUILDHALL, SOUTHAMPTON.

MASS OF CHRIST THE KING
Malcolm Williamson

Bournemouth Sinfonietta conductor Owain Arwel Hughes